

Echoes  
From  
Nantucket's Oldest House.

Cut of house here

Built—1686.

By  
Anna Starbuck Jenks  
(Custodian)

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## Dedication

To Mrs Fristrom Coffin, of  
Poughkeepsie, N.Y.—the present  
owner of "Nantucket's Oldest House",  
this little book is gratefully  
dedicated by the author:

Anna Starbuck Jenks.  
(Custodian)

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## Chapter I.

### Early Settlement of Nantucket.

An island situated thirty miles from the coast of the main-land must, from the nature of things, have a distinctive individuality and a history all its own. Such a history and such a strong personality has the "tart little island" of Nantucket.

It is not intended to elaborate that history in the pages of this little book, but only to give a brief introductory outline.

As early as the year 1641 Thomas Mayhew, a merchant living at Waterbury, had control of all the islands lying south of Massachusetts; he having purchased them from Lord Sterling in

that year. Mayhew in turn sold the island of Nantucket in 1659 to nine purchasers, viz: Tristram Coffin, Thomas Macy, Christopher Hussey, Richard Swain, Thomas Barnard, Peter Coffin, Stephen Greenleaf, John Swain, and William Pike; the consideration therefore being "thirty pounds sterling and two beaver hats".

In September or October following the recording of the deed of sale, the little band of first settlers, consisting of Thomas Macy and family, Edward Starbuck and family, James Coffin and Isaac Coleman set sail in an open boat from Salisbury, Mass. in search of their new possessions and to establish a home where they could worship

God "according to the dictates of their own conscience". They were afterwards joined by John and Richard Gardner, Peter Folger, Tristram Coffin and family and others. They were a brave little colony; few in numbers but stout of heart and determined to overcome all obstacles and to make ere long a home of comfort, bloom and beauty out of this erstwhile "sand heap of the sea". So with a holy purpose and Caesarian courage they came, they saw, they overcame.

Previous to the landing of these first white settlers the island was inhabited by several Indian tribes, numbering in all about three thousand. The Indians, however were

very friendly, and had a bright fire burning upon the beach, where they gathered to welcome the little boat-load of adventurers, and to extend their primitive hospitality to the new-comers. This tender of friendship on the part of the Indians was never abused by our ancestors, and peaceful relations ever after existed between the white people and the "red-skins". Indeed the example of Nantucket, like that of Wm Penn, in treating with the Indians, might well have been followed in other sections of our country and thus much and blood-shed have been spared. The new-comers were so hospitable that, in addition to having already

paid the thirty pounds ster-  
ling and two beaver hats" to  
Thomas Mayhew for his legal right  
to the whole island, they also paid  
each Indian for his individual,  
moral right to the land, as it  
was gradually acquired by the  
new "proprietors", and surveyed and  
marked off by Peter Folger,  
who was one of the original  
first settlers, and the grand-  
father of Benjamin Franklin.

In these days of comfort  
and abundance it is hard to  
realize the difficulties and  
hardships with which the brave  
pioneer Colony of 1661 had  
to contend in forming and  
building their simple homes  
in the little town of Sherborne as the first

settlement was called. They located this first village south-east of Capaum Pond, near the Wannacomet Pond in the year 1661. Antiquarian experts can still read the language of the peculiar depressions in the ground of that section, and translate them as having been the former cellars of Eustis Coffin's house and that of Stephen Tissell, and of others. The house of Edward Starbuck was on the land now known as the Cornish farm. The ancient town records substantiate also the fact that Sherborne was first located at Capaum, instead of at Madaket as erroneously stated by some local historians. The houses

at first were very small and crudely built from such scant material as they could gather upon the island; but, with the friendly assistance of the Indians, they gradually built up a little hamlet of about thirty houses, in that secluded section. In after years, however, as their numbers as well as their possessions increased, they realized the superior advantages of the present harbor, and so by degrees they changed their abode, even moving some of the houses, and notably the old North Vestry, their first "meeting-house", down to the present site, where they nestled securely as the nucleus of the town of Nantucket of future world-

wide fame.

Their first pursuits were fishing and agriculture; and, like all pioneers, they experienced, during those first twenty-five years of island life, a pre-wondering share of hardships and privations. But, fortunately, their health was rugged and their courage strong. Here, far out at sea, away from the dear home scenes and home comforts of their native England, they lived indeed the "Palm of Life"; and their very heart-beats throbbed with the spirit of the, then unwritten, line:

"Life is real; life is earnest".

Chapter 11The Oldest House.

On Sunset Hill, off of West Centre Street, in the north west part of the town of Nantucket, there stands to-day a weather-beaten land-mark, known as "The Jethro Coffin House", and also as "The Horse-Shoe House" (the latter name on account of the large brick horse-shoe in bas relief on the outside of the ancient and original chimney). It is the oldest house now remaining on the island, and has withstood the storms and the "tooth of Time" for two hundred and eight <sup>nineteen</sup> years at the date of this writing in 1905. It was built in 1686 and at that time was "a thing of beauty", and, from its

massive timbers, and solid construction, bade fair to be "a joy forever."

The little town of Sherborne (as Nantucket town was first called) was now twenty-five years of age; had passed its majority, as it were, and the people had begun to prosper and to add to their comforts by imports from the mainland. This house, therefore, was intended to outshine all others previously constructed. It was the fond scheme of Peter Coffin (son of the first Triabram Coffin) and John Gardner — the parents respectively of Jethro Coffin and Mary Gardner; a youth of twenty-three and a maiden of sixteen, who were about to wed.

Old John Gardner owned a

large tract of land on Sun-set Hill, and he set off about an acre of it - as the site of the new home and gave it - to his daughter as his half of the bridal present; while Peter Coffin, not to be outdone in fatherly generosity, and who owned forests and a lumber mill in Exeter, New Hampshire, brought in his own sailing vessel the solid timbers suitably hewn and framed, and, as his half of the bridal gift had the substantial homestead built for his son Fethro and the fair young bride. And his paternal heart thrilled with honest pride as he beheld its completed reality.

The marriage of the young couple - Fethro and Mary -

was celebrated in their new home; and every family then living on the island was invited to the festivities; all being closely related by intermarriage, and all feeling a warm interest in this much-talked-of wedding outfit. It was an unusual thing at that time for a young couple to commence housekeeping in a building of their "very own." It was customary for young married people to live, at first, under the parental roof, in one or two rooms "set-off" by the "old folks", until able to build for themselves and leave the home-roof for one wholly their own. So this was indeed a new departure for Jethro and Mary to celebrate their wedding and "house-warming" all in one day.

In its solid proportions and fresh new beauty; with its wide-mouthed fireplaces and armamented horse-shoe chimney; its long roof sloping nearly to the ground at the back as northern eaves brought; and its front windows looking "due south", according to the custom of the time; it stood indeed an imposing structure; and so far did it surpass all others yet attempted, that it was looked upon as a grand mansion, and a home where future comfort and wealth were likely to abound.

It stands to-day essentially unaltered; and with its original architecture and building materials unchanged. The heavy oaken beams running through the centre of the rooms and around the

sides, braced in the corners up-stairs by peculiar shaped buttresses called "ship's knees"; (brought for the purpose of extra strength from the ship-building state of New-Hampshire) all to-day are as sound as when first driven by the broad-axe and arranged into permanent place. The hand-split laths are still on the ceiling, held in place by hand-wrought nails; while patches here and there of the original shell-plaster still cling tenaciously between the open cross-beams and tell a "twice-told tale" of the good workmanship of two centuries ago.

On either side of the little "front-entry" is a large room; the one on the east being called the "Keeping Room" — as it was "hefted", or set aside, as the best

room, and opened only on rare occasions); while the one on the west of the front door was the "Living-room" — a combination of dining-room, sitting-room and kitchen. Just off from the "Living room", in the section under the long sloping roof or "lean-to" there is a smaller room, containing a very old wooden sink, and therefore called the "sink room", and adjoining this small lavatory on the right is a pantry; and on the left — a tiny room about seven feet by nine which was used as the "spare room" for the "old folks" when they came to spend the night.

The "Keeping room" and the "Living room" each had immense fire-places, the one in the latter room being moldered to-day, and in which one can stand and look

of the long open flue and catch  
a glimpse of the sky above  
like a glance from a friendly  
blue eye meeting one's own.

The opening of these fire-places is of  
peculiar design, having oval shaped  
jambs, or corners, instead of the usual  
right-angled or obtuse angled  
openings. Indeed we have been  
unable to learn of any other house  
in either this country or in Europe  
that has the oval jambs, and the  
inference is that it was specially  
designed to enhance the beauty  
of the bridal homestead.

Upstairs there were, originally,  
two large rooms; the one on  
the east side, being divided  
to-day, by a partition, into two  
small ones; but the large western  
room, or "bridal chamber" as it  
is called, remains unaltered.

and is a spacious room; the master piece of the house; with an oval shaped fire-place, a great luxury for those days, and a good sized window looking out over the modulating moorlands, and whence we can catch a faint glimmer of the "ocean blue", and a perfect flood of glory from the "pinsel's dying embers". It is in this room, and in fact throughout the upper part of the house, that the heavy side timbers are braced in the corners with full sized, "chif's knees" exposed to view; and the walls are double, with a back-filling of clay mortar.

A little clothes-press closet in this "bridal chamber" echoes to-day with a well-night tragic incident. The closet is now called the "Indian closet" on account

of the thrilling story connected  
with it.

A year or two had elapsed  
since the building of the house,  
and the young husband had gone  
on a sea-voyage, leaving his  
wife and child at home. One pleasant  
summer day she took her  
first-born infant, named Peter,  
and strolled across the fields  
to her father's house on the Cliff  
road, where she spent the day;  
returning in the twilight to her  
home on Sunset Hill. During  
her absence an Indian crept  
into the house, stole stealthily  
up the two flights of stairs and  
secreted himself in the large  
attic, intending to rob the house  
of any articles catching his trinket-  
loving eye. But like the hare in the  
fable he "fell asleep by the wayside,"

induced by the contents of the bottle which he carried with him. The garret was hot and redolent of drying herbs, and drowsiness overtook him ere he had scoured any plums. The long summer day wore to its close, and "Lo, the Poor Indian" slept on. As twilight deepened Mrs Caffin returned to her home, and being tired from her long walk, she ascended the stairs to the west chamber, where she rocked little Peter to sleep, sweetly crooning her lullaby song, all unconscious of the frawny form of the somnolent Indian overhead. Going down stairs at length, she lighted her sperm oil lamp, picked up the sputtering flame to new brightness with the little ivory keepsake, made from

20.

a whale's tooth, that Feitro  
had carved; and then knit a  
few "bouts" on the long, home-spun  
yarn stocking that she was fashioning  
for her sailor husband; counting  
in with the fast-growing flatches  
the flower growing record of the  
lonely months since Feitro sailed  
away. Then dropping her knitting  
in her lap she hummed to her-  
self the quaint little song:

"God pity the poor sailors,  
And all who cross the seas,  
What fears are theirs,  
What toils, what cares,  
While here we are all at ease.

May they in safety reach their port;  
Nor wreck, nor dangers know;  
And on shore fear no more;  
And on shore fear no more;

While the stormy winds do blo-o-w!  
While the stormy winds do blo-o-o-w!  
While the stormy winds do blo-o-o-o-w!"

Growing sleepy at last, she, too, retired to rest in the room above, with little Peter's curly head resting softly on her bosom; and soon mother and child were quietly sleeping in the silent house.

The high post bedstead in which they slept was in the corner of the room opposite the closet, the doors of which stood open. The drapery — or "furniture calico" — curtains with which the bed was canopied were drawn far back to admit a free circulation of the soft night-breeze that was laden with the salty flavors of the sea; and the shafts of moonlight upon the floor served as a convenient "night-lamp" for the room. In the middle of the night she was suddenly awakened

by a rumbling noise in the garret overhead, and just as she had located the sound, the loose boards of the garret floor gave way precipitating the Indian into the closet of her room. In the bright moonlight she saw him deliberately crawl out of the closet and seat himself in the corner of the fireplace opposite her bed, and threateningly sharpen his long knife on the bricks of the hearth. He was playing his little game of "Bluff" to frighten her into leaving the house that the "coast might be clear" for securing the possible plunder. The brave pioneer women of that day were not given to fainting or hysterics. This young mother, although less than twenty years of age, had

a physigne and a nerve that were made up of something more substantial than from practice with a golf stick or from dawdling over a ping-pong table. Mentally measuring the distance between her bed and the Indian and thence from the Indian to the door leading from her room; she seized her child; leaped from her bed like a white-robed phantom of the night; fled swifly past the glowering enemy; through the open door-way; down the crooked stairs, and out of the house; escaping across fields of mader-brush to her father's home in the distance. The Indian's mandarin lenses caught a consciousness of her fluttering garments as he passed the hearthstone and he tried to pursue her, but

His frequent resort to the "little brown jug" during the day, had made him incapable of navigating the crooked stairs, and he fell headlong, landing in a disabled condition on the floor of the little "front entry" below, where he was afterwards found by Mrs Coffin's father and brother and soundly punished for his attempted canine.

As we look into the "Andean closet" to-day; where, however, the flooring of the garret above has been repaired, a temporary feeling of "the creeps" is apt to seize one; and the fertile imagination of the author of "Vagrom Verse" has gone further still and has translated to my appreciate sense a section of the dilapidated plastering on the wall near the door

of the chamber, as a filmy  
but grotesque likeness of the  
intoxicated Indian dancing.  
His preliminary war-dance, as  
the fleeing "pale face" escaped  
from the room.

The Coffin House to-day stands,  
as it - stood more than two cen-  
turies ago, in an open field back  
from the road-way, on the brow of  
Sunset Hill. As an object of  
historic interest and curiosity it  
is second to none on the island.  
It is now kept as a relic of by-  
gone times and stalwart living,  
and is exhibited annually to  
large numbers of summer visitors  
who throng its rooms with ex-  
pectant faces, and who listen  
to its story with appreciative ears.  
A veritable Mecca it - has become  
to thousands of finely attuned

souls who are fond of "looking backward". Even little children — embryo poets some of them — who have been used to only luxury and modern convenience, are yet impressed by the primitive surroundings and the subtle aroma of romance still lingering here and forming a mysterious link with the far-away past.

To the custodian of the place, in the intervals between departed and coming guests, there come moments of reverie, when the almost ~~where~~ between the seen and the unseen becomes so rarefied, and unprofaned by "disturbing conditions", that the gentle heart beats of the bride almost find an echoing throb in her own, induced by the wireless message

from the far off shore, and reverently caught by the "receiver" of a kindred soul of to-day.

It seems fitting in this chapter to correct and permanently settle an erroneous impression concerning the well-nigh extinct ruin on the Polpis road to Siaquonset — known as the "Swain House". It is by a few strangers to the island mistakenly called: "the birth-place of Benjamin Franklin's mother"; and by a still larger number of misinformed people (islanders as well as strangers): "the oldest house on the island", versus, "the oldest house in town". Regarding the first error, it has been definitely settled that the house which Abiah Folger (Franklin)

was born in, is no longer standing, but was formerly located in the field, adjoining the spot, on the western outskirts of the Main St. road, which is now marked by the drinking fountain erected by the Abiah Folger Franklin Chapter, D.A.R. in memory of the mother of Benjamin Franklin.

In regard to the relative dates of the "Horse-Shoe House" in town, and the "Swain House" on the Palpiz road — the ruin of miscalled seniority — a quotation from "Godfrey's Guide Book" published in 1882, is authority sufficient — for all time. On page 231, devoted to "Old Buildings" he says:

"Wm C. Folger Esq. furnishes the following in relation to old houses:—

The late Benjamin Franklin Folger, who died March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1859, aged eighty-two years and eleven months, was by all or nearly all intelligent persons on the island considered the very best genealogist here, and the person most reliable then living for dates and facts regarding the early history of the island, its buildings, &c. He had made these matters a study from his youth, and had consulted early records and many ancient people on these subjects. He told me the oldest house on the island then standing, some years

before his death, was the  
 Jethro Coffin house on North  
 Shore Hill, which was built  
 in 1686. This house was purchas-  
 ed by the first Nathaniel  
 Paddock, from the Coffin  
 family in 1707 and it was  
 in the possession of the Pad-  
 dock family long after I  
 was born. This is the house  
 that - Tristram Coffin Esq. and  
 his brother bought and repaired  
 in 1881. \* \* \* \* \*

"I believe the next oldest  
 dwelling standing on the island  
 is the Swain House in Delpis".

\* \* This old house was built  
 in 1704. by John Swain, Sr. for  
 his daughter Elizabeth who  
 married Joshua Levalle".

Leaving Godfrey's Guide

Book and referring to the authentic genealogical records of William C. Holger, we find that Elisabeth Swain was born in 1676, and therefore had been married some time, and was twenty-eight years old when the house on the Polpix road was built for her in 1704; whereas if the Swain house had been built previous to the date (1686.) of the Horse-Shoe house it would have been when Elisabeth Swain was less than ten years of age and therefore not married, as likely to be in need of a house for a wedding gift. And an evident anachronism it is to accord greater antiquity to the Polpix house than

To the Jethro Coffin house.  
 But, until the fast decay-  
 ing ruin of the Polpis house  
 shall finally disappear, it-  
 will continue to make  
 a Banquo's ghost of itself  
 and rise before the distorted  
 data of our misinformed num-  
 mer visitors as the "truly  
 truly" oldest house.

To Allen Coffin Esq. of  
 Nantucket, author of a most  
 authentic work called: "The  
 Life of Triabram Coffin" -  
 a book which is literally  
 packed from cover to  
 cover with valuable historical  
 matter pertaining to the island -  
 I am indebted for reliable  
 data concerning old houses.  
 Mr Coffin is "in his element"

when browsing among ancient deeds and legal records; and having made a thorough research in regard to the claims of the two houses in question, makes the unhesitating assertion that the Becko Coffin House was built in 1686. and is the oldest house now standing upon the island, and, far-and-away ante-dates the old Polpis ruin on the Scowell road; thus corroborating the statements already quoted from Wm. C. Folger and Benjamin Franklin Folger.

I will add here, as a link in the chain of evidence, that as John Swain, Jr., a brother of Elizabeth (Swain) Leavall married Experience Folger,

a sister of Abiah Folger  
 (wife of Josiah Franklin)  
 it is natural to suppose  
 that Mrs Franklin may have  
 passed some time in the  
 house of her relatives on the  
 Palpiz road. Indeed a few  
 months previous to the birth  
 of her son she is said to have  
 paid a visit to her island  
 relatives; but the illustrious  
 Benjamin Franklin was born  
 in Boston in 1706 instead  
 of upon the island of Nan-  
 tucket; and to the everlasting  
 regret of Nantucketers of  
 to-day, who would like to  
 be able to proudly claim  
 his birthplace as well as  
 his ancestral blood.

James Parton, the historian,  
 in his "Life and Times of

Benjamin Franklin", says:

"It is probable that Benjamin Franklin derived from his mother the fashion of his body and the cast of his countenance. There are lineal descendants of Peter Folger who strikingly resemble Franklin in these particulars; one of whom, a banker of New Orleans (in 1864)\* looks like a portrait of Dr Franklin stepped out of its frame."

—\*

Jacob Barker.

## Chapter ~~II~~ III.

### Visitors to the Oldest House.

This old building will be enfolded, as the years roll on, by a dual mantle of history. The ancient and quiet-shaded life of its past, and the gayer, more ephemeral one of its present century, right seeing throng of summer visitors, will melt and blend in the shadows "on memory's nals."

To the custodian of the place, in the intervals between departed and coming guests, there come moments of revery, when the atmosphere between the screen and the museum becomes so rarified and unprofaned by ~~the~~ disturbing conditions that the gentle heart beats of the bride almost find an echoing throb in her own, induced by the voiceless message from the far off shore and reverently caught by the "Receiver" of a kindred soul of to-day.

## Chapters III. II

Visitors to The Oldest House.

The Old House will be enfolded, as the years roll on, by a dual mantle of history. The ancient and quiet-shaded life of its past, and the gay, more ephemeral one of its present century, sight-seeing crowd of summer visitors will meet and blend in the shadows "on memory's walls." As the years come and go, and its annual public inspection continues, the large book of registry that lies invitingly open upon the little antique "tip-up" stand, will become a valuable relic. Already its hundreds of pages are

36 even little children -  
ambrosia poets, some of them, who  
have been used only to luxury  
and modern conveniences, are  
yet impressed by the primitive  
surroundings and the subtle  
aroma of romance still  
lingering here and forming a  
mysterious link with the far  
away past.

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inspection continues, the large  
book of registry that lies  
invitingly open upon the  
little antique "tip up" stand,  
will become a valuable  
relic. Already its  
hundreds of pages are -

thickly covered with a varied  
throng of names representing  
all grades and stations in  
life; all ages and occupations.

The early pioneer life in  
this house in 1686, and its  
peculiar curiosity, or exhibi-  
tion life of to-day, how vast-  
ly different in tone and  
texture! We can turn from  
one to the other, just as the  
double-faced woven cloth  
for certain outer garments  
can be worn alternately upon  
either its plain or its bright-  
ly plaided side, as fancy  
or taste of the house shall  
decide. Like reversing a  
two-shaded golf-cape, I  
like to turn sometimes from  
thinking over the life of that

far-away, sober past, in which I had no part, to the warmth and personality of my summer guests, who come and go like birds-of-passage, and whose faces, impressed upon my mind, change and interchange, until at times they shape into a strange "Composite". And yet here and there a congenial spirit will stamp its features so indelibly upon my memory, by reason of the radiant smile or appreciative ear, that just the handwriting upon the register, seen months afterwards, will bring to mind the individual face that bent above the heavy book, while signing the name

thereon. Thus it is that the old house register has come to have for its custodian a history all its own; and the unseen writing "between the lines" of the recorded names would fill a volume of reminiscences that might be called "Studies in Human Nature." A <sup>mixed</sup> ~~mosley~~  
~~assortitude,~~ the ~~ang~~, day after day and month after month! Each day's opening knows not what it may bring forth, ere its close, in the shape of noted or unnoticed guests; agreeable or disagreeable; learned and highly cultured, or the superficial and common-place. All, indeed, are unconscious studies of genus homo for

the Custodian who, while she is under fire of inspection with the rest of the House furnishings, is also "a chile among them, take in notes!"

As a general thing, the visitors are pleasant and agreeable and very grateful for the descriptions given and attentions shown them. But such a variety! Some take only an outside view of the House; tip-toe up to the open door, read the card with its printed price of admission; take a mental inventory of their pocket-books, and, like the Levite, "pass by on the other side". But others conclude to come in. These linger long

and lovingly; thank me profusely at parting and "go on their way rejoicing". No two days are alike — no two crowds alike! Some are serious; some jolly; some refined, some coarse; some respectful, and reverential towards the Past and the old house as its patriarchal relic; others (though in the minority) quite the opposite in their lack of good-breeding and politeness. All this, however, I lock up in my brain while locking the cash in my cash-drawers, to be balanced at night in my mental ledgers. And just as the receipts in the business reckoning of the old

Mr. Hause

(2)

house exceed the small expense account, so the record of pleasant visitors always shows a fine surplus over the disagreeable ones.

Occasionally, a sober-faced humorist of the Mark Twain order will delight in teasing questions and skeptical allusions.<sup>3</sup> But, knowing it to be only banter and good-natured chaffery, one is willing to accept it as such, and reply only in like kind; or let it drift up the flue of the old chimney like the evanescent sparks from the crackling back-logs of the days of long ago. One's eyes, in those days, might receive a bit of tingle

from the smoke at first, but the next moment the light of pleasantness would glimmer through and the fire burn on with warmth and cheer in its glow.

Perhaps a few names culled at random from the registers may prove of interest to the readers of this chapter.

One page of the old book is especially dear to me. In the summer of 1899, on August 22<sup>nd</sup> was recorded the name, by her own fair hand:

"Frances F. Cleveland, Gray Tables." It was my rare privilege to entertain in the ancient house, on that bright summer day, the wife of ex-President Cleveland. Along with her name

is the autograph, also, of  
 Mrs M. J. Carlisle of New-  
 York, wife of Mr Cleveland's  
 Secretary of the Treasury. Mrs  
 Cleveland's brief visit to the  
 Island was made almost  
 incognito, and when she left  
 on the next morning's steam-  
 er for her home at "Gray  
 Gables", Nantucket's inhabitants  
 were wholly unconscious of  
 having "entertained an angel  
 unbeknown": She was the guest  
 while here of Col. and Mrs.  
 Robert Craig of Washington,  
 D. C., then occupying their sum-  
 mer cottage at Brant Point,  
Nantucket.

Mrs Cleveland's visit at The  
 Oldest House was like a  
 ray of sunshine that warms

the heart. The newspaper accounts of her modesty, gracefulness and beauty are no exaggeration; and I can understand now why she was beloved by her fellow-students of Welles College, and admired by her associates at the White House.

Before discovering her identity I felt aware of the atmosphere of a real lady; and after the glad surprise of recognition I knew that she "came honestly by" her former title of "First Lady in the land".

She was deeply interested in the story of Mary Gardner Coffin, our young bride of fifteen, and went from room to room of the old house, with her

46.

own beautiful eyes laughing  
sunshine. I shall never  
forget the warm grasp of  
her hand and prettily expressed  
thanks at parting; and I  
am glad that I was able  
to welcome to the ancient home  
of Ichabod Coffin's bride of 1686,  
the no less unaffected bride  
of the "White House".

In the following summer on  
August 20<sup>th</sup> 1900, Mrs Craig  
was kind enough to bring me,  
also, her guest Mrs Emma C.  
Perrine (formerly Mrs Folsom)  
of Buffalo, N. Y. Mrs Perrine  
is the mother of Mrs Cleveland,  
and her own personality has the  
same indescribable charm as  
that of her distinguished daughter.

Another registered name that

claims my attention as I turn the pages is that of Thomas Pope, Jr. an old gentleman from New Bedford. Mr. Pope's great-grandfather, on his mother's side, was Wm. Greenleaf, High Sheriff of Boston in 1776.; who was the first person that read aloud in an out-door assembly the Declaration of Independence. In Mr. Greenleaf's audience at the time was John Adams, who held up his little son John Quincy Adams, then nine years of age, that the latter might hear and see better, while the Declaration was being read. Wm. Greenleaf was the father-in-law of Noah Webster, and was also related to Stephen Greenleaf who mar-

ried a daughter of Nantucket's original settler, Tristram Coffin. The poet Whittier's middle name of Greenleaf also came from the same family connection; and thus our staunch old ancestor of the island, Tristram Coffin, the Declaration of Independence, the gentle poet Whittier and my visitor from New Bedford, Thomas D. Pope Jr. form the links of a chain of associations woven around this page where the latter's autograph appears.

One day the usual order of things was varied by a roomful of visiting Friends or Quakers — who were greatly interested in the old house, and were themselves objects of interest to the <sup>amongst</sup> gayer dressed,

"world's people" who were present at the same time.

Among the latter was a young lady with a camera who was about to take a picture of the outside of the house; and the happy thought came to her that it would add to her picture, and be quite in keeping with the place, if she could get the sweet-faced Friends to group themselves about the open door-way. They readily complied with her request and arranged themselves in characteristic attitudes. After the snap-shot was taken, one of the men of the party who wore the straightest brim to his hat, but who never-the-less had the keenest sense of humor, suggested: "Thee might-label thy

"The Innocents Abroad".

We all laughed, and "made a note of it"; and months afterward when an excellent copy of the picture was sent me by the artist who took it, I "labeled" it in accordance with his facetious suggestion.

+ Many little incidents break the monotony from day to day. On one occasion I was showing the crane in the old fire-place to an Episcopal clergyman. He told me of a visit that he once made to Mt. Vernon, and while looking into the fire-place there, he said an old gentleman chanced to be sitting on the paille in the chimney-corner at the time, when the custodian drew the clergyman's attention to the furnishings by the remark: "Look

at that old crane in there". Instantly the old man on the settle jumped up, shook his fist in the face of the innocent custodian and angrily exclaimed:

"What do you mean, sir?

By insulting me, sir!

The custodian was puzzled, but the man continued excitedly:

"Calling me an old Crane, and telling the minister to look at me!"

In the explanations which quickly followed it turned out that the <sup>way of the</sup> old man on the settle was named Crane, and the poor custodian had some difficulty in making him understand that he was drawing attention to the ancient crane on which the barrels were hung, and which was suspended above

~~the andirons~~; and that nothing personal was intended as he was unaware of his name.

By a strange coincidence, on the same <sup>day the story was told to me,</sup> afternoon following the morning when the clergyman had told me the above story of the angry Crane, I, too, had a <sup>sudden</sup> little experience. I was showing to a party of young ladies the furnishings of the fireplace in the "Keep-room", and wishing to distinguish the difference of the crane there from the upright, adjustable trammel hook in the "Living-room", I said, as I swung it from the andirons: "Here is the original, swinging crane". "Ah!" said one of the

young ladies, with a twinkle  
in her eye, "A Swinging Crane,  
is it?" And here is a  
dancing Crane!" At the  
same time she commenced  
pirouetting about the room.  
Her friends laughed but I  
did not fully catch the flavor  
of the joke till after she had  
gone, when looking ~~up~~<sup>at</sup> the reg-  
ister I found her name in  
Mrs — A. Crane.

~~An other incident of a recent  
summer: A young lad of  
jolly physique, upon entering  
the room caught sight of a  
sign-board above the mantle,  
which had been taken from  
the stern of a ship, wrecked  
upon the coast long years ago,  
and now kept in the old house  
with other ships' names, as reli-~~

of the sea. The board over  
the mantle bore the name  
of "Hamilton". To my surprise  
~~the young boy~~<sup>had</sup> struck an attitude,  
saluted the sign-board and  
exclaimed lustily:

"Ah Hamilton! Welcome  
Hamilton!"

It turned out that the boy's  
name was Hamilton Smith,  
and he instinctively felt  
a comradeship with this  
unknown vessel bearing his  
own given name; although  
he was unaware of the board's  
significance until I had  
time to explain its history.

The visitors, to use a  
sailor's phrase, hail from all  
quarters of the globe. On the  
register are names from

Old House

(3)

Copenhagen, Paris, London,  
 Japan, Cuba, Austria, Ireland,  
 Scotland, Wales and Germany;  
 while our own country furnished  
 tourists from Maine to Califor-  
 nia, and from as far south  
 as Dallas Texas. The doors  
 stand open to pilgrims as early  
 as the middle of June, and  
 from that time until the third  
 week of September there is daily  
 travel across its ancient <sup>old</sup> ~~and~~  
 soil, and the custodian <sup>stands</sup> ~~so~~ on  
 the alert to "welcome the com-  
 ing and speed the parting  
 guest". The first to arise,  
 in the sweet June days are the  
 bridal couples — God bless  
 them! — and it is a delight  
 to watch their interest in the  
 old house and, at the same

time, their absent minded, deeper interest in each other. The daily lives of to-day look almost pitifully at the primitive surroundings of the bride of 1686.; and when I show them her simple furnishings — or lack of them — they exchange tender glances with their own beloveds and express a shy little "vote of thanks" that their own house-keeping did not commence in that far-off time. In June the Nantucket eight-seeds are usually from near-by cities of our own state and Connecticut, from Boston and New Bedford ~~and~~<sup>and</sup> perhaps the eastern cities of New-York. These early comers are likely to be clerks and other working <sup>busy</sup> people who have

a little vacation of a fortnight  
in early summer, and then must  
hasten back to the daily routine.  
So they do not come from far  
away, but, making a flying visit  
of a few days to the island, they  
drink in great draughts of our  
sea-air tonic and then fold their  
tents "and away again, with new strength,  
we trust, for another year of  
usefulness.

Later on, in middle July <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~  
August, come the ~~seaside~~ <sup>sunlight outing</sup> ~~genteel~~ guys and  
the Southern people, + the leisure  
class, + who stay and stay, and  
enjoy themselves to the full, and  
"dream the happy hours away".  
In August - the hotels are "brim-  
ming full"; the cottages all  
occupied. The town must be  
explored; the sights and "points

of interest" must be taken in"; and so "The Oldest House" on Sunset Hill is sought by young and old, by grave and gay alike. Some come to see me regularly year after year, and sometimes several times during the same season, bringing as their guests, friends who have not before seen the old structure.

From the register I cull these names of

Regular Visitors:

Miss Helen Minshall,  
Terre Haute, Indiana.

Mr & Mrs Chas. Minshall,  
Terre Haute, Indiana.

Miss Margaret Minshall  
all from "Terre Haute, Indiana."  
The late Capt. J. W. Congdon, U. S. Revenue Service.

Mrs H. C. Underwood, Belmont, Mass.

Miss Helen Underwood, " "

59 or to 65 - (1)

Yonkers, N.Y.; Mr. and Mrs. George Libble,  
 Mt. Vernon, N.Y.; Mr. and Mrs. Irving  
 Elting, Miss. Elting, Mr. and Mrs. Charles N.  
 Arnold, Miss. Katherine Arnold, and  
 Peter B. Hoyt of Poughkeepsie, N.Y.;  
 Clifford Folger South Framingham, Mass.;  
 Mrs. Lucia B. Tyng, Peoria Ill.; Mrs.  
 C. G. Lee, Wollaston, Mass.; the late  
 Charles H. Webb and Miss. Webb, Mr. and  
 Mrs. William C. Boone, John T. Boone,  
 Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Vanderpool, and  
 Mr. and Mrs. Paul G. Thebaud, of  
 New York City.

There there are dear little children  
 who love to come each year and  
 peep, in wide-eyed wonder, into the  
 shaded corners of the rooms; and  
 listen over and over again to the  
 story of the "Indian Closet." I love  
 to read these names of my children;  
 recalling their bright faces in the  
 prevalent hand writing so peculiarly  
 alike, as taught in the schools  
 of to-day. Here are the names

59 to 65 (2)

Miss. Helen Minshall, Mr. and Mrs.  
Charles Minshall and Miss. Margaret  
Minshall, from Terre Haute, Indiana;  
the late Capt. J. W. Congdon, U.S. Revenue  
Service; Miss. Helen Underwood, Mrs. E. P.  
Atkins and Miss. Helen Atkins, from  
Belmont, Mass.; the Misses Dorothea  
and Irene Bargnhar, Detroit, Mich.;  
Miss. Nellie Bishop, Newtonville, Mass.; Misses  
Ruth and Beatrice Shutz and Miss. Margery  
Junker, Summit, N.J.; Miss. Phebe A. Luther,  
Brooklyn, N.Y.; Miss. Agnes W. Gould,  
Albany, N.Y.; Dr. Allen Burdick, Richard G.  
Elkins, Miss. Emily Weeks, Miss. S. C. Lugee  
and Miss. Elizabeth B. Porter, ~~of~~ Boston,  
Mass.; Mrs. C. H. Bishop of Rochester,  
Mass.; Dr. E. T. Tucker, New Bedford, Mass.;  
Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Evans and Mrs. Robert  
Craig, Washington, D.C.; Mrs. Stokely  
Morgan, Roxbury and Nantucket, Mass.;  
Mr. and Mrs. Harold C. Kimball, Rochester,  
N.Y.; Mr. and Mrs. George W. Shaw,  
Lansingburgh, N.Y.; Louis A. Howland,  
Chicago, Ill.; Misses Cornelia and Isabel  
Hayt and Mr. and Mrs. William S. Walsh,

of some of them; 59 to 65 (3)

Nathalie Walker, Brookline, Mass.;  
 Edith S. Walsh, Wilhelmina Walsh,  
 Master Frank C. Walsh, and Jessie Hoyt,  
~~Yonkers, N.Y.~~ and Eleanor Radford,  
 Yonkers, N.Y.; Master Stokely Morgan,  
 Roxbury and Nantucket, Mass.; Master  
 David Williamson, Colorado Springs, Col.;  
 Master Charles Paul Kimball, Master Mitchell  
 Hart, Rochester, N.Y.; and Mrs. Ruth Brown,  
 Oneida, N.Y.

From the list of regular visitors,  
 I cull for special mention, the name  
 of the late lamented Charles Henry  
 Webb, member of the "Authors' Club"  
 of New York and long a summer  
 resident of Nantucket. Mr. Webb and  
 his daughter, Miss Webb, delighted  
 in bringing to the old house on  
 the hill top celebrities from  
 the world of letters; and I am  
 indebted to him for an  
 introduction to many a  
 "rara avis" of poetry and  
 prose. Mr. Webb's own  
 writings were the now-de-plumé  
 "John

~~Mr & Mrs George Dibble,  
Inl-Kernon, N.Y.~~

~~Peter B. Mayh,~~  
~~Poughkeepsie, N.Y.~~

~~Chas. H. Webb and Miss Webb,  
New-York and Nantucket.~~

~~Dr & Mrs Wm C. Boone,  
New-York, N.Y.~~

~~John T. Boone " " "~~

~~Mrs Lucie B. Tyng,~~  
~~Peoria, Illinois.~~

~~Mr & Mrs Fanning Elling & Miss Elling,  
Poughkeepsie N.Y.~~

~~Miss Elizabeth B. Porter,  
Boston, Mass.~~

~~Mrs C. G. Lee,~~  
~~Wollaston, Mass.~~

~~Mr & Mrs A. H. Vanderpool,  
New-York, N.Y.~~

Mr & Mrs C. N. Arnold,  
 and Poughkeepsie, N.Y.  
 Miss Katharine Arnold,  
 Poughkeepsie, N.Y.  
 Mr & Mrs Paul G. Thebaud,  
 New York, N.Y.  
 Mr Clifford Folger,  
 So. Framingham, Mass.  
 Mr & Mrs Wm S. Walsh,  
 Yonkers N.Y.

Then there are dear little children  
 who love to come each year and  
 peep, in wide-eyed wonder, into  
 the shaded corners of the rooms,  
 and listen over and over again  
 to the story of the "Indian Closet."  
 I love to read these names of  
 my children; recalling their bright  
 faces in the prevalent hand-writing  
 so fearfully and peculiarly alike, as

taught in the schools of to-day. Here are <sup>the names of</sup> some of them.

Children who are fond of coming to the "Horse Shoe House": —

Nathalie Walker,

Brookline, Mass.

Edith S. Walsh,

Yonkers, N.Y.

Wilhelmina Walsh,

Yonkers, N.Y.

Master Frank C. Walsh,

and "Jane Hoy" Yonkers, N.Y.

Eleanor Radford,

Yonkers, N.Y.;

Master Strokey Morgan,

Roxbury and Nantucket, Mass.

Master David Williamson,

Colorado Springs, Col.;

Master Charles Pond Kimball,

Rochester, N.Y.

and

Master Mitchell Hart,  
Rochester, N. Y.

Miss Ruth Brown,  
Oneida, N. Y.

Master Jesse Hoyt,  
Gonkers, N. Y.

From the list of regular visitors, I call for special mention, the name of <sup>the late temperance</sup> Charles Henry Webb, member of the "Anchor's Club" of New York and a summer resident of Nantucket. Mr. Webb and his daughter, Miss Webb, delighted to bring to the old house on the hill-top celebrities from the world of letters; and I am indebted to him for an introduction to many a "rara avis" of poetry and prose. Mr. Webb's own writings, over the nom-de-plume "John

Paul", sparkle with wit and quaint conceits. His published books of poems bear the titles: Vagrom Verse and With Lead and Line. He has brought to the Old House on different "red letter days" the following well-known lights of literature: —

Mr Charles Warren Stoddard, late professor of English literature in the Catholic University of America, Washington D.C., and author of "South Sea Idylls", "In The Footprints of The Padre" and other well-known works in prose and verse. Mr Stoddard is the most delightfully modest "great light" that ~~it~~ has ever been my privilege to meet, and I look back upon that August afternoon as one of great social rarity. Here's hoping

that his own "footprints" may some day be repeated on Sunset Hill!

Other friends with Mrs Webb were: Rev. Dr. Henry Van Dyke of New-York and Princeton, Frank Dempster Sherman, the poet, — J. C. Fremont Gardner, and others; and at a recent date, Miss Hildegarde Hawthorne, daughter of Julian and grand-daughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Miss Webb also brought her guests Mr & Mrs Howard Thayer Kingsbury of New-York.

The register contains the names of the following authors, newspaper men and professionals: George Willis Cooke,  
Boston, Mass.,

67.

Judge Wm Russell Thayer,  
Philadelphia Pa.;

Mr & Mrs John E. Morey (Evening Times)  
Rochester, N.Y.,

Chas. C. M. McBride,  
Elizabeth N.J.,

Mrs Wolcott J. Humphrey,  
Vice-president Wyoming County Natl. Bank.  
Warsaw, N.Y.,

Henry W. Longfellow (Cousin of the poet)  
Boston, Mass.,

Chas. F. Ridgway (author)  
Boston, Mass.,

Mr & Mrs Pierre Purcell,  
(Union and Advertiser)  
Rochester, N.Y.,

Mr & Mrs C. D. Gibbs  
(The Springfield Republican)  
Springfield Mass.,

Mrs Minot J. Savage,  
New-York,

Sister Gray,  
 England,  
 Walter Whipple Arnold,  
 Rochester, N.Y.,  
 Alexander Starbuck,  
 (Editor of The Waltham Free-Press)  
 Waltham, Mass.,  
 Mrs Katherine Lente Stevenson,  
 State pres. W.C.T.U.  
 West Newton, Mass.,  
 Albert F. Ring, West Newton, Mass.  
 { Isabel Irving Thompson,  
 W. W. Thompson,  
 Henry Collins Waloh, New York,  
 J. C. Burdett, Boston, Mass.,  
 Geo. Lincoln Whitaker,  
 (New-York Herald)  
 New-York,  
 E. F. Cunningham,  
 (New-York Tribune)  
 New-York,

Old Name

(H)

The late Wm. Frank Barnard,  
Sup't. Five Points House of Industry.

~~New York, N.Y.~~

J. L. Spencer,

(Proprietor of old Slater Mill —  
first cotton mill in America, built 1793)

Pawtucket, R. I.,

Jesse M. Smith, (civil engineer)  
and

~~New York, N.Y.~~

Walter James (civil engineer and architect)  
New York, N.Y.

The army and navy are represented by: —

Wm. M. D. Jr. Cook, Maj. Gen. U. S. A.,  
<sup>Brig. General</sup> M. Brayton, U. S. A.

The late Lieut. Berkeley Morgan U. S. N.,  
Surgeon Oliver Diehl, U. S. N.,  
Medical Inspector S. H. Dickson, U. S. N.,

Washington D. C.,

General J. H. Kelcham,  
Oliver Plains, N.Y. ~~New York~~

J. Pitman, U. S. Arsenal  
Augusta, Georgia.

J. L. Pitman, M.D., Augusta Arsenal, Ga.  
W<sup>m</sup> H. Corbinier, U. S. A.,  
Henry W. Fitch, Chief Engineer U.S.N.,  
(Retired with rank of Commander)  
Washington, D.C.

\*  
There is such a long list of medical  
men and clergymen who find ben-  
efit—at Nantucket, both physically  
and spiritually, that a few only can  
be mentioned here:—

Dr. C. S. Jordan,  
Asheville N.C.,  
Dr T. E. Knowles,  
South Orange, N.J.,  
Dr W. S. Gibson,  
Baltimore, Md.,  
Dr Geo. A. Ordway,  
Boston, Mass.,  
Dr. Allen Burdick, Boston, Mass.

71.

Dr. C. G. Lane,

Poughkeepsie, N.Y.,

Dr. John D. Roe,

Rochester, N.Y.,

Dr. E. J. Tucker,

New Bedford, Mass.,

Dr. Henry Middleton Fisher,

Philadelphia, Pa.,

{ Dr. Mary F. Mann,

{ Dr. M. Ella Mann,

Nantucket, Mass.,

Dr. E. G. Fox,

Weathersfield Conn.,

Dr. James Fox.

Willimantic, Conn.,

Rev. Wallace Radcliffe,

Washington, D.C.,

Rev. W.C. Snodgrass,

Plainfield, N.J.,

Rev. A. W. Gibson,

Munsey, Pa.,

Rev. Geo. R. Hazard,

Southboro, Mass.,

Fr. T. J. McGee, D. D.

(St. Mary's Catholic Church)

Nantucket, Mass.

Fr Austin Dowling,

and Providence, R. I.,

Rev. Sumner W. Stevens,

Philadelphia, Pa.

In the bright-August days visiting  
yachts come into Nantucket's harbor,  
anchoring for a brief season and  
sending gay parties on shore "to see  
how we look". On my book I  
find the following:—

S. Yacht "Marion".

J. W. Gore, Goshen, N. Y.,

Chas. P. Berdell, Summit N. J.

Theodore Berdell        "       "

Alice Paul Berdell        "       "

and

73.

C. Prescot<sup>of</sup>, Summit, N.J.

Yacht "Albatross", New York.  
Messrs C. & D. Palmer.  
Mrs C. M. Palmer.  
Miss Nellie Palmer.

Yacht "Charlotte" - Chicago.  
Mr & Mrs A. M. Foster,  
Mr E. W. Brest,  
Guy A. Smith,  
Mr & Mrs James A. Lawrence.

Yacht "Millie" - Barrington, R.I.  
Commodore John Jenckes, wife and daughters.

Steam Yacht - "Susanna".  
Robert F. Ballantine.

R. & B. Pitney.

Cape Simpson.  
Mr & Mrs Frank Berklie.  
Geo W. Pitney.

74.

Gachl -

D. H. Dangan - Denver, Col.

D. E. Reid, ~~New York, N.Y.~~

Mrs Reid, " "

and Rhea Reid, of New York... "

Mrs Dangan, ~~Denver Col.~~

Miss Dangan, of ~~Denver~~, Col. -

Clara J. Morgan, Richmond, Indiana.

Maj. L. E. Campbell (U. S. A. Retired)  
of Denver, Col.

Miss Campbell,

and Oliver H. Bogen, New York, ~~N.Y.~~

Gachl - "Gevalia" - New York.

Alice Mary Sloane.

Names of Scientists I have not  
been able to identify except one -  
and that - by no means the least:

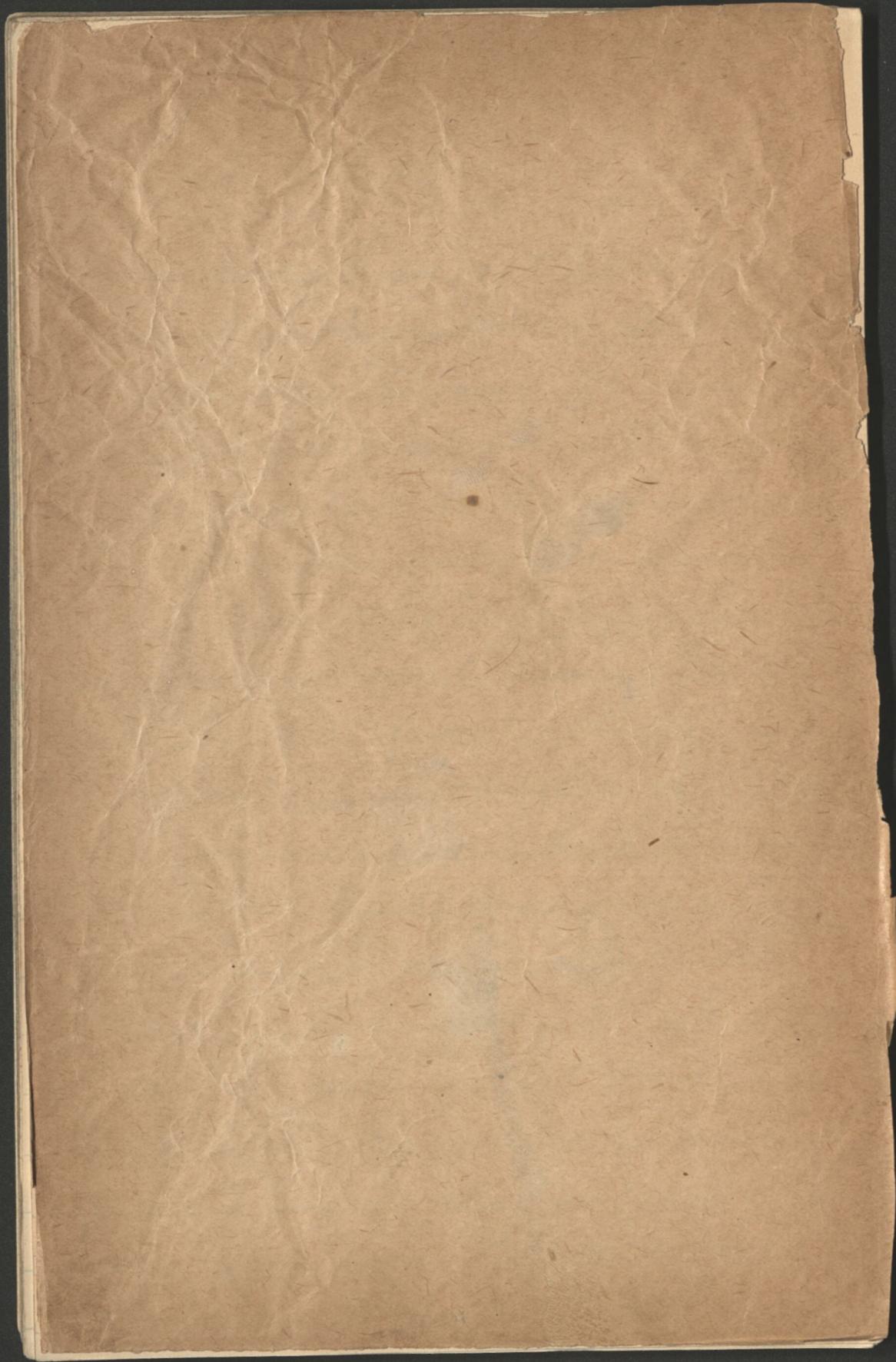
Dr Benjamin Sharp of Philadelphia  
and Nantucket. Dr Sharp  
was for eleven years the cor-

75.

responding secretary of the "Academy of Natural Sciences" of Philadelphia, Pa. He has travelled extensively, collecting information and specimens for the Academy. He sailed to the West Indies in 1888-9; went with the first Peary expedition to the Arctic in 1891, and in 1893 he was collecting rarities and scientific lore in The Sandwich Islands, Alaska, and Siberia. And yet after all his travels abroad, Dr Sharp was pleased to find something to interest him in Nantucket's ancient relic of olden days, the Horse Shoe House.

The great book of record is sprinkled so thickly from cover to cover with the names of Coffin, Folger, Swain, Starbuck, Brewster, Gardner, McCoy, Bernard, Hopper,

Macy, Jenks, and other good  
Nantucket flock, or descendants  
of Nantucketers, that <sup>a</sup> ~~several~~  
~~volumet~~ would be needed to  
publish the list; and so I trust  
the necessary omissions from  
these pages will be readily  
pardoned.



Chapter ~~IV~~<sup>77.</sup> III.

Early and Later Days.

Nantucket has a charm and a beauty and a sense of restfulness all its own. It is said that islanders have a stronger love of "native land" than any other people; and this seems deeply true of the inhabitants of our own fair sea-girl shore. To come back to its quiet streets and homesteads, in middle or later life; and to spend one's last days here, is the fond dream of nearly all of us. There is very little chance of business; much less of money-getting; but there is better far; there is rest and memory and safety; and time to enjoy God's own lavish wealth of sea and sky and Nature's

gladness. And so, again and again the journey is made to this "beautiful isle of the sea" in quest of health for the bodies and spirits and tired nerves of her children. As one looks eagerly into a mother's dear, welcoming face at the end of a journey, so every returning Nantucket-~~er~~ looks with almost tear-dimmed eyes of gladness for the first glimpse of the town of Nantucket, rising to view with queenly grace from her sea-encircled throne. It is a birth-place of which we are justly proud, for its record is historical; and the pages regarding her whale fisheries are of world-wide renown; while her war records, both colonial and in the civil war, are

all that one patriotic feelings could desire  
magnificent; and the achieve-  
ments of her sons and daughters  
in the noblest walks of science,  
literature and Art, as well as in  
the humble heroisms of home life,  
have left no blot upon her ex-  
chequer.

Precious then to many is the an-  
nual privilege of resting and lux-  
uriating in this quaint old sea-blown  
place, and laying in a store of life's  
saline elixir. The days are so  
calm and blue and deliciously  
idle for the summer vacationist;  
the nights made for rocking the  
cradle of the gods. Most all  
of the houses are <sup>simply</sup> ~~most elegant~~  
in architecture, owing to the Quaker  
taste of the early inhabitants, and  
yet substantial and comfortable  
in the extreme. From the windows

[of many of these one can daily  
feast the eyes upon the exhaust-  
less blue of the Harbor's shifting,  
shimmering beauty. Twice each  
day in summer one can hear the  
sound of the coming steamer's whistle,  
and, taking a position at the open  
window, watch for her to cleave  
the channel and round majestic-  
ally to her pier. A never-failing  
delight is to watch the ever-changing  
face of the sea and to drink in its  
health-laden air. The view, from  
my home window, of the pleasure  
villas that dot its surface  
is never twice alike. Swift-  
little cat-boats and yachts  
of all sizes are constantly flitting  
past and tacking to quit the  
breeze; seeming in the summer  
sun like great white winged

butterflies of the deep. Then again the wind gets into the East, and the gale stiffens, and the white caps dance; and we watch the wild leaps of the foaming waves, which Robert Louis Stevenson calls "the skipper's daughters fleeing before the breeze".

The old town is full of the deepest interest, for every house has its history of old time association; every street and lane its memories of the past. To visit the "halls of one's ancestors" after a lapse of years, and look once more upon rooms andingle-side where linger now only sweetest shadow faces, is to feel a thrill that words cannot convey — only the heart can truly feel it now.

Old  
House

The most interesting period of the island's history is her middle past. To that "golden age" of her prosperity and maritime success her inhabitants point with pride and enthusiasm, as Nantucket's "palmy days". It might with equal truth be called her oily days. From 1834 to 1850 she was at the "white heat" of the whaling industry; and the spreading canvas of her shipping was on every sea — the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, and even the Arctic ocean. Her whaling and merchant captains placed their vessels' careening decks as veritable monarchs of the deep; and brought home from foreign ports well-freighted cargoes of oil that

represented months and years  
of arduous toil and strenuous  
wrestling with storm and fleet and  
beakers' road. Cargoes that - en-  
riched themselves and the ship  
owners; and gave to the residen-  
tial part of the town an air of  
comfort and solidity that - is no-  
ticeable even to-day in many  
of the old mansions; particulary  
on the Main St. which is lined  
on either side with great double  
houses, where large families  
were reared and educated, and  
exchanged neighborly courtesies  
and the old time graces of a  
true gentility.

In 1834 there were 10,000. in-  
habitants, and over 200 full-  
rigged - or square rigged ships,  
besides smaller craft; and

Nantucket ranked third in wealth in the whole state of Massachusetts — Boston being first and Salem second. In 1870 her last ship was sold and not one "whaler" was left to do her reverence". Nantucket was a belle of the sea in those olden days, and traces of her beauty even yet remain. Can you blame her if, like poor old Mrs Nickleby, she looks pathetically into the eyes of inquisitive, and perhaps supercilious "strangers" and cannot help boasting that she "has seen better days"?

Ah, and such days! All the craftsmen were at work; all the industries flourished around the central one of oil. Coopers shops for fashioning the great casks and hogsheads resounded

with the cooper's adz, and were  
fragrant with great mounds of  
curly shavings. Rope-marks  
stretched their lengths along where  
~~huge~~ hawsers and tarry rope-  
yarns were woven and twisted  
in the glow of the sunnies sun-  
beams. (To a genuine descendant  
of those times — even two generations  
remote — a stray whiff of tarred  
rope, in passing a city rope store,  
to-day, will send a thrill of  
ecstasy through his nerves that  
"land lubbers" "know not of".)  
Candle houses there were that  
worked up the oil into smooth  
tapered candles, and contained  
~~large~~ cases of them all ready  
for shipment or for home consump-  
tion. Blacksmith shops where  
the anvils rang with merry chorus  
all day long, fashioning copper

nails and sheathing and harpoons  
and whale-spades, galore. Paint-  
shops and boat-builders' shops.  
And sail-lofts; that could be  
cleared of gearing and sail rubbish  
at short notice, and an evening  
ball improvised; where blue-jack-  
eted sailor lads of good repute  
could "trip the light fantastic" with  
bright-eyed lassies — the real  
"elite" of the town. I once heard  
an aged Nantucket lady, in speak-  
ing of that time, and drawing herself  
up piquantly, allude to it-jestingly  
as: "The good old days, when  
oil was plenty; money was plenty;  
and sailors were plenty!"

It was not all play, as this lady  
well remembered. While there were  
heroes sailing the "waters blue"  
there were heroines at home,  
keeping the hearth-stone bright.

and the heart light and brave  
 and true, and a royal welcome  
 in store for their returning voyagers.  
 These heroines were in all ranks of  
 life — from the captain's and  
 mate's wife to the help-meet of  
 the humblest sailor that dwelt in  
 his lonely bunks on the home-coming  
 tide.

The home-coming ships; how much  
 that meant to all concerned!  
 So much to report of the cargo and  
 crew; so much to learn concern-  
 ing the home life on shore. For  
 months no passing ship had been  
 "spoken"; no news of home and  
 family. Pathetic tales to tell  
 of loss and sickness on both  
 sides. Sometimes a ship would  
 come into the harbor with flag  
 at half-mast; and the waiting  
 wives on shore knew not which

one was to face the cruel blow of bereavement. There was a comradeship among the women of those days and a bond of sympathy that we, to-day, have but faint conception of.

The great "walks" — or lookouts on top of the large houses, were where the ship owners repaired, day after day, with spy-glass in hand, watching for their returning vessels. As they paced back and forth, on the upper house-decks between earth and sky, they were trying to mentally figure out the possible amount of oil that was gurgling even then in the tight-salked casks safely stowed away in the hold of the ship in the offing.

On the "walks", also, that belonged to the houses where captains' families resided, would often

be seen the figure of a woman; gliding to and fro; perhaps a child in her arms; and looking wistfully sea-ward in the direction where she thought her husband's sail might "bear in sight".

There was a custom in those days, among the young boys of the town, a rivalry among them — to be on the watch for expected home-coming ships; and, knowing the several flags, to run speedily and announce the welcome news to some anxious wife that her ship was in sight. The first boy to bring the message to her was substantially rewarded. A stated and regular sum was given according to the rank of the woman's husband. The captain's wife always gave a dollar for the tidings — the mate's wife

gave fifty cents; and so on down the scale. Not that the male's wife was any less glad to hear of her husband's safe return, but her funds differed in proportion to the rank.

Folded away, and fading now, among the pages of that early day — like fragrant smelling sprays of lavender or sweet marjoram — is many a fragment of "the old, old story" of love and fidelity, and patient waiting for the realization of hopes long deferred. Brave hearts sailed away on the very eve of plighted troth, to be absent three, and sometimes four years "around the Horn" before seeing the loved ones again. A comic song that was going the rounds of the theatres a few years since had more pathos

than fun in a verse wherein  
a sailor's last words to his  
chum enjoined:

"A crooked sixpence in my chest —  
Likewise a lock of hair —

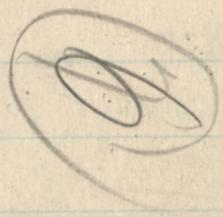
These things I do

Solicit-size you

Unto my sweet-heart bees".

Oh those little crooked sixpences  
exchanged between Nantucket lovers  
on the eve of sailing! How many  
a fond look has been given them  
during the voyage! Many a poor  
sailor lad's heart has been  
kept warm under his blue jacket,  
and his eyes have softened ten-  
derly as her sweet face seemed  
to watch from aloft while he  
swung back and forth in the  
ship's shrouds; his hair taking

Old Horace



on that - peculiar turned under  
 roll at the back of his neck,  
 where the spray of the sea - foam  
 kept it in curl. And the little  
 gold rings in his ears — so tiny  
 you could scarcely detect the hoops  
 of wire — how they glistened when  
 the nights were wet with fog!

Why did sailors wear ear-rings,  
 I wonder! There has always been  
 a mysterious fascination to me  
 in the perfect sang froid with  
 which these muscular creatures  
 of storm, and gale, and possible  
 shipwreck, sport such feminine  
 ornaments. I have sometimes  
 wondered if it was to carry  
 about with them — as a sort  
 of charm — some tender little  
 suggestion of the characteristics of  
 the loved ones on shore.

<sup>fall</sup> Then there was a certain

unwritten code among the  
 girls of the island to look  
 with favor only upon those who  
 "went down to the sea in ships"; and  
 landmen had a poor chance among  
 them in the matrimonial line. But  
 sometimes, with an eye to the main  
 chance of a "bird in hand" against  
 "bird in the bush", a bebrothed  
 sailor's lover far away at sea has  
 been cruelly discarded in his ab-  
 sence; and returning from a long  
 four year's voyage he has found  
 the faithless one married to a  
 rival sailor on shore who had  
 never "struck a whale". Some  
 poor sailors were thus "wing  
 broken" (as this unfortunate  
 and disconsolate state was aptly  
 styled) several times; and on  
 successive voyages, before

a faithful help-mate was finally secured. But happily, such cruel cases were the exception and not the rule.

The religious life of Nantucket has varied with the centuries; but, take it all-in-all, the underlying warp and woof has been woven of the solid principles and unquestioned probity of the society called Friends — or Quakers. The very first established religious seat of the island, according to some authorities, was the old "North Meeting" — or Presbyterian — now changed to Congregationalist, whose "Vestry" of to-day is an ancient structure which once stood in the old settlement of Sherborne, near Capaum Pond. About the same time when this Vestry was erected

There was also a sprinkling of Baptists and a few Friends.

But everything was favorable for the seed of the latter society to germinate and take root. And so when the early preachers came with their gentle exhortations and quiet, simple ways, the people "heard them gladly" and readily adopted that faith, being already used to the "Thee" and "Thou" of the mother tongue.

In 1698, Thomas Chalkley, a Friend from England, visited the island. He wrote of the people: "At this time a Friend was convinced whose name was Starbuck who became very serviceable and lived and died an eminent minister of Christ on the island." The person here alluded to was

Nathaniel Starbuck, Jr. son of  
Nathaniel and Mary (Coffin) Star-  
buck.

In 1701, John Richardson and  
Peleg Slocum, Friends from  
Dartmouth, visited the place in  
a sloop. Meetings were held at  
the home of Mary Starbuck and  
from this beginning the Society  
grew to great strength and influ-  
ence. Mary Starbuck was the daugh-  
ter of Christopher Coffin and married  
Nathaniel, son of Edward Starbuck.  
She has always been known in the  
annals of the island as "The great  
Mary Starbuck", on account of her  
wisdom and her value to her  
country people. The Society of Friends  
on Nantucket really sprang from  
this family.

About the year 1700, there were  
but two or three individuals,

bearing the name of Friends, while in 1735 Daniel Stanton

found a large number of "choice members"; and Samuel Fothergill in 1755 says there were "nearly two thousand of Friends and attenders of meetings". The population at this date was a little over four thousand.

And so these people of sober garb and gentle speech and warm, honest-hearts, "increased and multiplied" till there was the prevailing order of belief at the time of Nantucket's "palmy days".

Her Quaker merchants and her Quaker sea captains were familiar figures in the busy streets; while the sweet faced Quaker mothers and the slender maidens made a picture both pleasing

and resentful to the eye.

Narrowness of living perhaps there was, and a rigidity of habits; but underlying all was a worthiness of motive — a nobleness of character — that has leavened succeeding generations, and has been of sufficient endurance, we trust, to save the Isle. Gradually the society declined until the last "Meeting House" was closed for want of attendants; and a few years since the last Quaker inhabitant of Nantucket — William Hoxier — "ceased from his labors" but "his works do follow him".

Trails have been handed down from a long line of Quaker ancestors that are easily discernable to-day. There is

a plainness of speech; an independence of thought; and a quiet contentment with one's lot, which are a natural inheritance from that far off time. We use to-day the plain "yes" and "no" in answering one another; and are chary in the use of titles; calling each other by our given names, even in adult life; thus keeping up the comradeship of childhood, when it was John or Reuben or Phoebe W. instead of Mr. or Mrs. —; but that is because we all seem more or less connected by the family links of long ago, and we feel a subtle something tugging at our heart strings that we cannot explain or even understand. We only know that we are "islanders", and that word contains volumes of

meaning to us all.

In this year of grace 190<sup>5</sup>, Nantucket's glory and grandeur have departed; her population has diminished from ten thousand to less than three thousand; her sea captains are nearly all dead; their descendants mostly resident in active fields of labor on the mainland; but the old island is still beautiful and still holds out-inviting arms, and offers her great familiarity to annual hosts of strangers who seek her shores in search of health for mind and body and weary nerves. Her charms are as seductive, her climate as salubrious, her beach as sweet with the invigorating salt-sea flavor as in the olden time of her prosperity. The great

outlying moorlands, fragrant with heathery moss and bayberry and sweet-fern, have been compared to Scotland's own. The musical south wind sweeps over them fanning the cheek of the invalid and giving it an added roundness and a fresh coat of tan that the "Brownies" might envy.

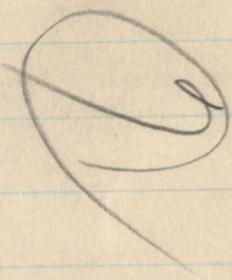
There are comparatively few trees on the island; although to-day the town is well supplied with shade trees, among which are some fine specimens of elms. On Centre Street, near the Ocean House, there stood, until recently, three large willows which came originally from Napoleon's park at St. Helena. The slips from which these large willows grew were brought from that historic

Place of burial, years ago,  
by Captain William Plaskett

in the ship Napoleon, which  
was formerly owned here and  
whose name-board now hangs  
on the wall of the "Keeping-room"  
at the Old <sup>new</sup> House.

But if trees are "few and far  
between", Nature seems determin-  
ed to clothe the fields and  
the open moors with a floral  
beauty that is unsurpassed in  
extent and variety. Botanists  
revel in the island's wonderful  
Flora, which is said to contain  
more specimens of wild-flowers  
than any other section of New-  
England. If only the botanists  
"helped themselves" to these treas-  
ures there would be no cause  
for complaint; for your true

Old Home



botanist gathers only what is necessary for "specimens" and then abides manfully on his way. But unfortunately there are unthinking tourists who ruthlessly pluck rare varieties and as ruthlessly beat up roots and all; then scatter "to the four winds" these gifts of Nature; heedless of the fact that even a lavish growth of root and vine and tendril can in time be exterminated by such annual wholesale raids. <sup>for</sup> "Tis ~~bond~~ his pity" that the shy abiding place of a small patch of genuine Scotch heather, which is trying to attain a secure habitat, has to be kept at present a "dead secret" among a favored few until the precious plants shall have time to increase

beyond danger of extinction.

A few years since a society was formed which is called:

"The Maria C. Owen Society for the Protection of the Nantucket Flora".

This society is trying to do "here a little, and there a little" in the way of an "ounce of prevention" to cure this annual "slaughter of the innocents".

I take pleasure in copying here the society's printed card of appeal, wherein it:

"Respectfully calls the attention of visitors to the fact that the existence of the sabbatia, swamp-orchids, hibiscus, red lilies, heathers, and some other especially attractive plants, is seriously menaced through reckless picking. It asks the co-operation of those who delight in the

beauty of the commons, and their aid in perpetuating this charm by careful gathering both in smaller quantities and in such a manner as to leave the roots uninjured. Recommendation is made also that matches be used with care and that all fires noticed on the commons be put out or promptly reported to the Forest Firewards".

In this unpretending old seaport town, where wealth once abounded and gentility was inborn, there are, to-day, rare curios and antiquities of which the floating tide of "summer people" little dream. Many a fragrant cedar chest contains rich fabrics from foreign looms of "lang ryne". Many a china closet sports its

bit of lustre ware or its  
helmet-pitcher; its china  
tea-set of egg-shell frailly, or  
its monogram dinner-sets com-  
plete in every piece. It was a  
custom of the early whaling days  
for the captains, mates, and  
even the sailors, to bring home,  
from their long voyages "around  
the Horn", something dainty and  
precious, and pleasing to the  
feminine taste, as presents to the  
dear home keepers who had  
so patiently waited for the  
returning sailors and kept the no-  
less-tensions "watch on shore". Thus  
many homes here to-day con-  
tain these mementoes of the  
heart-thal have been handed  
down from generation to genera-  
tion. Relic hunters would be

glad to purchase them at fab-  
ulous price, but they are not  
for sale. A peep at some of these  
private collections of quaintly car-  
ved furniture and rare ceramics  
is a privilege indeed. It is often  
said that "blood will tell". Is it  
not as curiously true that a certain  
wraith of the old-time hospitality  
still lingers about the antique ma-  
hogany side-board, and a subtle  
aroma seems to float from  
the fragile china tea-cup that  
"tells" its own sweet story of  
"ye olden days"?

## Chapter II.

### Glimpses Through The Horse-Shoe Chimney.

A weather-worn house "perched up aloft" on the hill-top! Built in 1686 when Nantucket's commercial, industrial and social history was yet in embryo. Built so substantially and "upon honor" (as they builded in those days) that it has withstood the storms, the gales and the tempests of two centuries and nearly two decades more; and is yet good for ~~some~~  
<sup>many</sup> years to come as a respectable ~~ci - derant~~. Known now as "The Oldest House" on the island, also as the "Jethro Coffin" and "Horse Shoe House", it is an object of interest to strangers.

and residents; and is visited annually by large numbers of sightseers in quest of antiquarian tid-bits. The old wooden shutters creak on their hinges as they crested in the "crazy Son-Westers" of two centuries ago; while the same salt-laden breezes sweep over the billowy oat-fields and come back freighted with the perfume of the new-mown hay in the meadow-lots. The skies are full of glorious cloud effects; and the songs of the birds and the shrill of the early crickets keep the wind-swept air constantly filled with music. And such bird-songs, unmixed with any jargon of the street! And no human note of discord to mar the symphony! Every day the meadow-larks give "open air concerts"; while the swallows, with

a rhythmical whirr of wings,  
 are almost tempted to fly  
 through my open door-way. While  
 listening to my favorite meadow-lark,  
 in his yellow vest with its black  
 pectoral crescent, I am almost  
 inclined to become a Pythagorean  
 and to believe in the ancient  
 dogma of human souls inhabiting  
 after death the bodies of animals  
 and birds. Why may not the  
 meadow-lark embody the soul of  
 Mohammed? Certainly he up-  
 holds the crescent and carries  
 it from land to land. Surely  
 he sings his little notes that Allah  
 has given him and can we say  
 that he is not "His prophet"?

There are associations connec-  
 ted with an old house like this  
 that render it worthy of reverent  
 tread. Visions come to me here -

of the fair young faces that once looked out through the tiny window panes; especially that of the youthful bride, as she shyly glanced through the one row of panes called "the Indian peep-hole" at the side of the door, before answering the knock of the chance caller, in those by-gone days. As I notice the inroads which time has made upon the walls, where the plaster has dropped away in patches, and the laths have slipped from their places, I am moved to tenderness of feeling, such as a very aged person ought to inspire when we see, and yet for very sympathy feign not to see, the thinning hair, the drooping, trembling form, and eyes over which the film of

years is gathering. A most deplorable incident of summer inspection of an old house is the thoughtless writing of autographs upon the walls; unless anticipated by the constant vigilance of the attendant. About as senseless a practice as it would be in calling upon the "oldest inhabitant" to flyly scribble one's name upon the dear old lady's apron strings when she was off her guard; imagining thus to electrify future callers with the fact of one's having made a previous visit.

If this old house could speak it would tell me many a tale of the good old times when the building — as well as the hearts within — was fresh and trim and fair. When the latch-string of welcome hung out; and true

Hospitality of the heart reigned supreme. The young couple com-

menced their house-keeping here with no prompt; no reluctance; but they came into possession, at the start, of good health, good looks and good principles; and industry would certainly do the rest.

*Like their own hay-fields, fresh and green,  
Life opened up its fallow meads.*

There is a certain board in the floor to-day that, as I step over it, gives back a little note of weird melancholy beneath my tread.

Longfellow has written of the creaking hinges of an old door being the cry of imprisoned souls in Purgatory, wailing to be set-free. But in contrast to the unhappy Purgatorial ghost,

I am reminded, whenever I step upon this resonant board, of the blessed union of fond hearts; and this little weird note seems like a musical echo of a happy marital relation. Violin makers go wild over wood taken from old houses as flock for violins. If a fortunate maker could secure this board of my discovery he might fashion an instrument that would rival in tone a famous Cremona.

Visitors here are interested in an old Nantucket sleigh which stands in one corner of the room, a relic of bygone merriment and pleasure. It is one hundred and twenty-five years old, and though it did not have the good fortune to claim over the snow with our fair young bride,

for occupant, it has doubtless carried many a load of her laughing descendants who made merry in those days with the same buoyancy of youth as is the fashion of to-day in more stylish and costly surroundings. A gentleman tourist lately informed me that a sleigh exactly after this pattern may be seen to-day in Russia; a relic of a ride therein which the first Czar of Russia took from Moscow to St. Petersburg; showing that our typical old-time Nantucket sleigh is of Russian design.

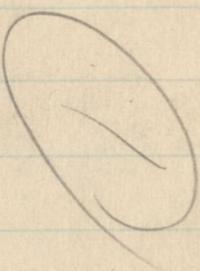
There are possibilities of endless threads of revery in an ancient house like this, if one have but the magic wand to summon them. Catholic priests and the Catholic Sisterhoods have stated times

in the year which they set apart  
for "going on retreats", as they call  
them, for religious meditation. Sure-  
ly this Simset Hall retreat of mine  
is conducive of all kinds of medita-  
tion — religious, fanciful and  
beamful.

Standing quietly alone on the time-  
worn hearth, and in the cavernous  
space of this great open fire-place,  
on a warm summer afternoon,  
and looking with awesome face, up  
and up, and still up, the smoke-  
lined flue of the "Boar-thoe  
chimney" of the "Oldest House"  
what do I see save the rectan-  
gular opening set like a frame  
for the patch of blue sky which  
glimmers down upon me its  
ague mystery? I catch glimpses  
of other scenes in that bit of

blue sky above me. Do I see them or is it—the sensitive "dry film" of my imagination taking "snap shots" for future "developing" as I shall sit in the ancient "fiddle-back" chair in the single-nook? Question me not too practically, but here are a few of the glimpses, floating down to me through the telescopic eye of the now smokeless chimney. I see first of all, like a vision in a cloud-mist, the sweet young face of the bride of fifteen — Mary Gardner — for whom the house was built as a wedding gift. I see her in her simple, bridal array, standing in the "best-room" to receive her guests as they come with gentle, sincere hand-clasps to wish her joy, and to admire

Mr. Hennec



her new house, which was then  
 the "Talk of the Town". Beside  
 her stands her young husband —  
 Jethro Coffin — who has inher-  
 ited from his grand-father  
 Tristram those sturdy elements  
 of character which still thread  
 in and out through our various  
 webs of Nantucket genealogy.  
 Quietly and most tentatively they  
 began their housekeeping up here  
 on the Hill-top. Sunset Hill  
 it — was to old John Gardner  
 and Peter Coffin who had  
 built — and furnished the sub-  
 stantial oak-timbered structure;  
 but Sunrise Hill it also was  
 to the young couple in the  
 bright-dawn of their love-life.  
 No superfluous finery here —  
 no "modern conveniences" — the dry

pink was not only guiltless  
of any sanitary "fall trap", but  
was without so much as a suspi-  
cion of any outlet for the waste  
water. There were no "jet tubs" of  
soap-stone; no polished tessell-  
ated floors; no electric bell on  
the floor under the dining-room  
table, by which my lady's clipperead  
foot could noiselessly summon  
the maid to change the courses;  
none of the senseless and vexatious  
conventionalities of the year 1900.

Fretted the nerves and wrinkled  
the fair brow of this dear little  
bride of 1686. But she was  
happy here! Oh I know she  
was happy, though the conveniences  
and luxuries were few, though  
she "did her own work", and with  
the most primitive cooking

utensils. Ah but they had  
 been appetites in those days that  
 needed no coaxing — appetites which  
 come of sturdy work and right-liv-  
 ing — and many a savory odor of  
 roasting meat was wafted up this  
 spacious chimney as Mary's  
 shapely hands turned the crank  
 of the old roasting-spit, still  
 here in the house to-day. Tempting-  
 ly tender also, and of the right-gold-  
 en hue, were the meal-cakes or  
 "bannocks" baked in this old "tin  
 oven". And think of the work in-  
 volved! For the meal had to be  
 first pounded from the corn  
 in this home-wrought, hoop-  
 bound mortar — no mills be-  
 ing then upon the island for  
 grinding corn. The pestle that  
 did the pounding is of solid

stone, and a heavy weight for delicate hands of fifteen. But it was "Love's a Labor", and therefore not "lost"!

Wreaths of smoke have gone up from this chimney which told of good cheer and hospitality within. Merry-makings, "comely frolics", and family gatherings have been here. Children's innocent voices have trilled and shouted in the sunny west chamber. On winter nights the great back-logs have crackled lustily and sent a shower of sparks up the hungry flue. It is a long, long way to look back, even as now I look up to the distant patch of blue sky outside the chimney's a ~~sun~~ blue eye looking down upon my footy mouth; and as I sleep out from the ample boughs to

The stillness of the vacant rooms,  
 There comes to me a verse of the  
 old song — slightly paraphrased : —

X  
S

Gone on the hill-top,  
 The old house stands,  
 Where fathers and mothers once dwelt;  
 With the old door-latch  
 That was worn by their hands,  
 Near the church where in prayer they knelt.  
 Years, years have fled since that happy time,  
 But the ocean's still rolling along;  
 And the birds, and the bees,  
 The blossoms, the trees,  
 Keep singing the same old song.

Chapter ~~III.~~ IV.

An Idyl of The Sea.

(A true incident.)

Far out at sea, an island, lone,  
 Whose shores the tumbling breakers bound,  
 Nantucket isle, with placid brow,  
 Smiles o'er the waters of the sound.  
 Peaceful the airs above her head;  
 Peaceful the wavelets at her feet;  
 While myriad shells, with pearly lips,  
 This tale of answered prayer repeat.

More than a hundred years ago —  
 Old records can the date recall —  
 Throughout the town a deadly fear  
 Crept to the heart of one and all;  
 For just without the harbor bar,  
 Where moaned the tide with stilled breath,  
 There lay at forced anchorage  
 A British frigate armed with death.

In vain the people planned defence,  
 No bulwarks walled the Quaker town,  
 No battlements, no ancient keep,  
 No strength to beat invaders down.  
 They saw the captain's stern command  
 To "man the boats", and well they knew  
 No mercy for their hearths and homes  
 Would harbor with the hostile crew.

But stay! A passing gleam of hope!  
 The wind was blowing from the shore;  
 All safe until its breath should change;  
 No landing for the boats, before.  
 Then from each sad and anxious heart,  
 From hoary sire, and maiden fair,  
 There rose, unchecked by form of words,  
 An earnest burst of sobbing prayer.

A prayer to Him who rules the winds,  
 And holds the waters in His hand,  
 To save them in their island home,  
 And keep the wind from off the land.  
 And then from Heaven the answer came;  
 The gale, unchanging, day by day,  
 Swept out to sea defiantly  
 And held the dreaded foe at bay.

For weeks the scowling monster lay  
 Without the port, with evil eye;  
 But never once a change of wind;  
 And never once a change of sky.  
 Grown tired at length of power denied,  
 And hopeless watching of the prey,  
 With muttered curse it raised the siege,  
 And from the harbor sailed away.

And ever since, the loving tides  
Have swept the coast with laughing song;  
And ever since, the fruitful year,  
With joy and peace have rolled along.  
And He who gave the wind its course,  
Who dared this lone, unguarded strand,  
Still watches o'er the sunny isle,  
And holds it in His loving hand.